

Personal Information

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Degree Program at TAU: MBA

Host University: Ross Business School, University of Michigan

Exchange term (including the duration): WinterA

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Exchange Experience

Please use the outline below to write your report:

- **About the country and city**

Michigan, a state located in the northeastern region of the United States. Ann Arbor is a university city, and the different schools of the university are distributed throughout the city. During the winter months, from December to February, the city experiences extremely cold temperatures, ranging from -22°C to 10°C. The absence of tall buildings in the city contributes to strong winds, making outdoor activities challenging. All buildings are equipped with heating systems, typically set to 80°F (approximately 26.67°C). Ann Arbor boasts several malls and shopping areas, as well as an historic theater that offers movie screenings. The city provides various dining options, including establishments that accept orders via Grubhub or dedicated apps, as well as walk-in restaurants where patrons can sit and dine. While some restaurants may experience high foot traffic, particularly during the evening hours, there are always alternative dining options nearby for socializing and enjoying meals with friends.

- **About the host university – campus and school atmosphere, location, staff attention and care.**

This institution offers an excellent environment for studying, with numerous on-campus study spaces and convenient room reservations available through QR codes or the Wolverine information technology system. The majority of MBA courses are held in the Ross building or its adjacent Blau building. The Ross building features a gym (with a yearly fee of \$200), a subsidized dining hall, and a Starbucks. The surrounding area is home to numerous coffee shops, fast-food restaurants, bars, and other amenities. The administrative staff is highly responsive and efficient, typically providing assistance within 48 hours, and some have even responded while on business trips. Orientation day is the primary opportunity for in-person interaction with the administrative staff. Otherwise, students can contact them via email or participate in the monthly lectures (IC) where international students are invited to share insights about their home countries. Additionally, students receive weekly emails featuring engaging activities such as guest speakers, mentorship opportunities, sports events, and more.

- **Courses and professors**

During the two months I was there, I enrolled in seven elective courses. Most of the courses were excellent, and the professors demonstrated genuine care and a desire to impart knowledge. However, all courses required substantial reading materials to comprehend the material, as quizzes were conducted in subsequent classes. Consequently, skipping readings was not an option. While the readings were generally engaging, they could be overwhelming if one did not fully understand the expectations for each class.

The number and frequency of assignments varied across classes. Some assignments were distributed throughout the term, while others were reserved for the latter part of the term. Some professors actively encouraged group discussions, while others adopted a more individualistic approach.

The primary distinctions between classes at TAU and Ross lie in the expectations, intensity of preparation, and assignments, as well as the level of engagement. Most classes concluded with a final paper or home exam, with only one exception. This latter exam was particularly challenging due to the limited time available for preparation, as all courses require a final assignment to be submitted. In contrast, TAU provides several weeks for all finals.

The registration process for courses can be cumbersome, even for exchange students. While you may be eligible for additional classes beyond the allotted number or at a reduced rate for certain special classes, this information is often not disclosed until after registration. Additionally, becoming an alumni requires completing at least 12 credits.

For international students without a US bank account, transferring funds from an Israeli bank account to a City bank account in London via an app called Flywire can be a complex and time-consuming process. Failure to adhere to the deadlines may result in a 30-dollar fine.

- **Extra curricula – orientation, social activities, student union, etc.**

Orientation day occurred a few days prior to the commencement of the academic term. The faculty provided comprehensive information, reiterating the same details they had previously shared in a Zoom session fifteen days in advance. Additionally, they facilitated an international panel for inquiries and organized table group introductions with international students in smaller groups, divided into BBAs and MBAs sections. Furthermore, they connected some students with international buddies. Specifically in my case, my buddy did not reach out, but I understand that some other students, particularly those pursuing BBA programs, were reached out by their buddies. I did not engage with the student body, so I cannot provide an assessment of their social activities. As I mentioned in one of the previous responses, there were numerous activities, some of which were not entirely up-to-date. For instance, there was a Bagel Day event where they offered free bagels to all attendees, but it was canceled without prior notification. Additionally, there is a Slack channel that provides updates in addition to the newsletter, and it also lists club activities open to all students. If you are interested in social activities, Ross Business School at the University of Michigan is undoubtedly a suitable environment for that purpose. Furthermore, there is a WhatsApp group specifically for international exchange students of the same term, which allows you to connect with them, socialize, participate in sports, or join Uber/Lyft rides to and from the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County International Airport (DTW).

- **Career center (if applicable)**

Although I have not personally engaged with them, I know of some friends that have. You can work in the dining halls or as a teacher assistant. There are limited opportunities, but if you are taking many courses, it will be challenging. If you are interested in entrepreneurship, there is the Zell-Laurie Institute (ZLI) which assists students in their initial steps, through mentorship and securing pre-seed and seed funds.

- **Business and Network Development**

There are numerous opportunities available, including alumni, current students, international students, and various clubs. Additionally, there is a small Jewish community that observes *שבת קבלת* every Friday.

- **Accommodation – dorms and other solutions**

Only BBA students are eligible for subsidized accommodation. As an MBA student, you are responsible for your own accommodation arrangements. You will receive a spreadsheet listing all exchange students from the Ross School of Business, which you can utilize to connect with them. The monthly rent for accommodation ranges from \$600 to \$1400. The average rent for local residents is \$1600, so be prepared for potential negotiations. I had only one flatmate, a BA exchange student, who left after a month due to the high rent. My building was located within a five-minute walking distance from the campus, which is advantageous during snowy weather. However, the campus is situated far from any grocery stores other than 7-Eleven (similar to AM:PM). Therefore, you have three options: register for an application to rent a car (allowing you to drive to Whole Foods, Kroger, Cosco, and Walmart), order food in, or be prepared to walk approximately one kilometer each way. Additionally, there is a Maize Market, which serves as a market for donated products for economically disadvantaged students.

- **Visa**

The process of obtaining a student visa to the United States is a lengthy and intricate one that requires at least two to three months of advance planning. Scheduling an interview at the US embassy in Tel Aviv involves a significant time commitment, as since the use of electronic devices is prohibited there, all necessary documentation must be brought in hard copies. Additionally, scheduling the visa interview and application process is contingent upon the completion of all required paperwork for the F-1 visa, which includes the I-20 form (in some cases, the J-1 visa may require the use of a different 3060 form). Furthermore, the specific forms required may vary depending on the hosting university and are subject to annual changes.

- **Transportation**

Certain buses, known as TheRide, offer complimentary transportation to all passengers. Additionally, buses provide free rides for individuals presenting a valid student card. Furthermore, there are buses that transport passengers to Detroit, specifically the D2A2 route, which operates in both directions. The cost for each way ticket is \$6 when booked online. Amtrak is another option, offering train services departing from Ann Arbor station. These trains connect to various states, including Chicago (Illinois). The train station is located approximately 2 kilometers from Ross, necessitating a bus or a walk. Most trains operate during the early morning and late evening hours hourly.

- **Insurance and health services**

Individuals are compelled to enroll in health insurance coverage through the local Blue-Cross Blue-Shield, a member of the Blue network (Michigan's largest hospital network). This requirement applies unless one can demonstrate superior alternative coverage. It is important to note that travel insurance alone is insufficient for this purpose. Fortunately, I have never had to utilize any of its services, but I know it is very different from what we have in Israel.

- **Living expenses**

The cost of living varies depending on individual lifestyle choices. As a general estimate, living expenses can average around \$100 per day. Social activities, such as attending sports events, can range from \$0 to \$80 (colleges, professional can cost more than \$200 a ticket). The cost of a beer typically amounts to \$12 per 0.4 liters. Additionally, it is advisable to include a 20% tip and US taxes in your calculations. In summary, for an individual with a moderately active lifestyle, the daily cost of living can be estimated at approximately \$125.

- **Food**

As you are likely aware, the cost of food in the United States is relatively high. While some products are priced similarly to those found in Israel, others are significantly more expensive, particularly fruits and vegetables. Additionally, the variety of food options available in most locations is limited compared to what you may be accustomed to. For a wider selection of spices and more exotic products, you can visit supermarkets such as Whole Foods which are farther than the campus or specialized stores dedicated near campus, like Indian spices, or Asian tea shops.

- **Night life**

The term is quite busy with schoolwork, including the extended weekends (Friday-Sunday), resulting in limited events during the late evenings or weekends. While there are some bars catering to singles, most of them have a drinking age of 21, making it challenging for individuals who are older. It can be more difficult for students from Israel to make friends due to the limited number of exchange students from Israel (I was the sole representative). Consequently, it can sometimes feel lonely. In contrast, other countries have people from their respective countries, and they typically socialize within themselves, speaking in their native languages. However, the suitability of this approach depends on individual preferences. There are numerous clubs available, each offers exclusive activities, during the day and some activities during the evening / weekends.

- **Tips**

During the winter months, the cold and slippery conditions necessitate the wearing of multiple layers to facilitate undressing upon arrival at various locations. To mitigate the risk of slipping, make sure to wear snow shoes (you can in Ann Arbor) or use Blundstone which provides a partial solution. To avoid suffocation when entering anywhere, remove layers. To avoid dryness, manifested as cracking of lips and dry skin, maintain a glass of water within reach of your bed to enhance humidity levels in the room (it works, even though it may sound silly).

Given the diverse student population and their varied origins, it is safe to assume you will engage in collaborative projects with individuals from Asian backgrounds. This will challenge you to comprehend cultural differences and individual personalities, which can easily lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications.

As an Israeli student, your direct communication style may differ from that of your peers. It is crucial to be aware of this characteristic and adjust your approach accordingly to foster effective interactions.

To maximize your academic experience, it is recommended to plan a trip before the commencement of the semester. The limited time available during the term, even on weekends, is insufficient for such endeavors, unless you opt for the minimum required number of credits (8/9, if memory serves) throughout four months.

If you intend to retain your account after graduation, including extended license of UM Chat-GPT and Gemini (highly beneficial tools), it is essential to achieve a passing grade in at least 12 credits overall.

It is strongly advised against considering this university, particularly during the winter months, if your primary objective is to engage in recreational activities. While it offers an excellent academic environment, this should be sufficient to fulfill your educational aspirations.

During the academic year, you have the opportunity to travel during the spring break, provided you are enrolled for the full term. However, it is important to note that arriving only a day or two before the orientation day may result in severe jet lag.

- **How did this exchange experience add value to your studies at Collier?**

Studying in English presents a significantly greater challenge compared to your native tongue. Although I previously worked with an international US team in English, the daily work environment was less demanding. Particularly for those who prefer active participation over passive listening, converting thoughts into comprehensible English requires a substantial amount of energy. Despite this enjoyable challenge, the course materials were exceptional. I enrolled in a course on US health systems, which stands in stark contrast to our Israeli health system. It is more intricate and involves a larger number of stakeholders. Furthermore, I participated in a class with numerous leaders from the biotech and pharmaceutical industries, who provided guidance on initiating biotech initiatives. This experience was quite different from the population in Israel. The students themselves were diverse, representing cultures from Japan, China, the US, Germany, Hungary, and the Czech Republic and more. Additionally, I took a class on healthy business, which provided valuable insights into the mindset of Americans, healthy lifestyles, and the business perspective on these concepts.

- **Photos**



(Chicago, The Ledge)



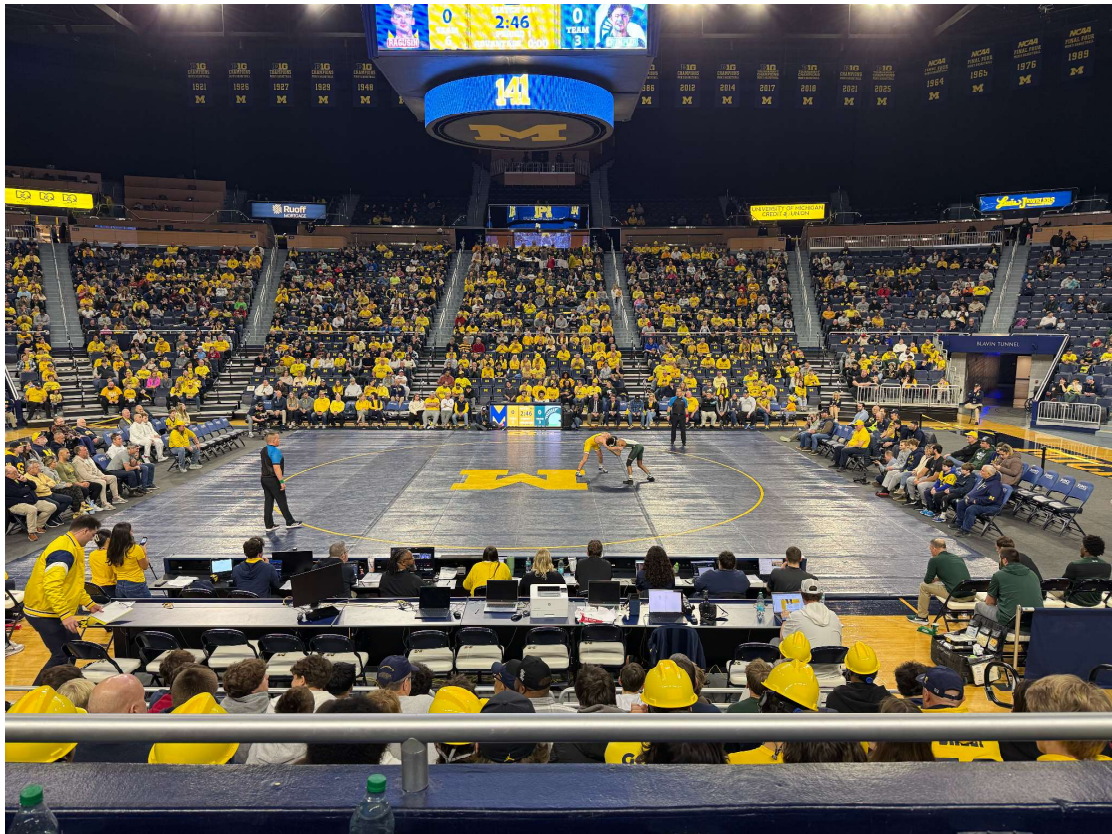
(Chicago, The Bean)



(Ann Arbor, Law Students Library)



(Ann Arbor, Crisler Center)



(Ann Arbor, Crisler Center)



(Ann Arbor, Yost Arena)

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